

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 03548 242224Z
ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 NSC-05 INR-05 SS-14 CIAE-00
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-----027193 242240Z /15

P 242145Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 854
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 3548

LIMIDS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, SO, ET
SUBJECT: FORLANI'S CONCERNS ABOUT HORN OF AFRICA

REF: A) ROME 3319: B) ROME 3294

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR FEBRUARY 24, JOURNALIST LEO WOLLEMBORG SAID THAT HE HAD JUST SPOKEN WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI WHO, KNOWING THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE CHANCE TO SEE AMBASSADOR BEFORE LATTER'S DEPARTURE FOR THE US OVER THE WEEKEND, ASKED WOLLEMBORG TO PASS ON URGENT MESSAGE. FORLANI SAID THAT WITHIN THE PAST 72 HOURS HE HAD HAD INDICATIONS THROUGH CONTACTS WITH SOMALIS AND WITH PCI THAT EITHER SIAD BARRE WILL FALL AND BE REPLACED BY PRO-SOVIET PUPPET REGIME OR THAT SIAD BARRE HIMSELF WILL REVERT TO PRO-SOVIET POSITION. ACCORDING TO WOLLEMBORG, FORLANI HOPES THAT THE US WILL MAKE CLEAR TO THE SOVIETS THAT EITHER EVENT WOULD BE VIEWED BY US WITH GRAVITY AND THAT THERE WOULD BE "COSTS" TO INCREASED SOVIET DOMINANCE IN THE HORN. IN RESPONSE TO WOLLEMBORG'S QUESTIONS, FORLANI SAID THAT HE IS NOT CONVINCED ABOUT ASSURANCES REGARDING INVIOABILITY OF
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SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN BORDER.

2. COMMENT: SOMALI WARNING ABOUT CHANGE IN REGIME APPARENTLY COMES FROM FEBRUARY 20 VISIT TO ITALY OF FOREIGN MINISTER JAMA BARRE (REF A). OUR WORKING LEVEL CONTACTS (WHO HAVE TOLD US THAT JAMA BARRE SAID THAT REVERSION TO PRO-SOVIET POSITION WOULD BE

CONSEQUENCE OF SOMALI WITHDRAWAL FROM OGADEN)
BELIEVE THAT SIAD BARRE WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO
RETAIN POWER BY BLAMING SOVIETS FOR TAKING BACK
WHAT HE HAD WON FROM ETHIOPIANS. THE WORKING
LEVEL ALSO THINKS THAT SIAD BARRE HAS GOTTEN RID OF HIS
PRO-SOVIET RIVALS FOR POWER AND THAT ANY REPLACE-
MENT IS LIKELY TO BE MORE PRO-ARAB. WE ASSUME
THAT THE PCI ASPECT OF FORLANI'S COMMENT IS THE
RESULT OF A RECENT VISIT TO MAGADISCIO BY PCI
CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER GIADRESCO. GIADRESCO'S
ATTEMPT, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN AN EFFORT TO PRESERVE
PCI ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN SOMALIA AND TO MINIMIZE LOSS
OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN WAKE OF PCI ENDORSEMENT OF
ETHIOPIAN CAUSE (REF B).GARDNER

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